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Message Text

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15
ACTION ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20

USIA-15 AID-20 DRC-01 /116 W
---------- 016958
R 042215Z JUN 74
FM AMEMBASSY QUITO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1244
INFO AMCONSUL GUAYAQUIL

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT, EC
SUBJECT: FORTHCOMING DECREE ON MUNICIPAL AND PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENTS

REF: QUITO 1773

1. SECGEN FOR ADMINISTRATION, COLONEL CARLOS AGUIRRE, HAS ANNOUNCED THAT GOE IS CURRENTLY PREPARING A DECREE TO DEAL WITH RENEWING THE MANDATE OF MUNICIPAL AND PROVINCIAL AUTHORITIES ELECTED IN JUNE OF 1970, AND WHOSE TERMS ARE SLATED TO EXPIRE ON JULY 31 OF THIS YEAR. THOSE ELECTIONS BROUGHT TO OFFICE, AMONG OTHERS, 19 PROVINCIAL PREFECTS AND 19 MAYORS OF PROVINCIAL CAPITALS, MOST OF WHOM HAVE SINCE BEEN ADMINISTRATIVELY REPLACED BY THE PRESENT GOVERNMENT WHICH CAME TO POWER IN FEBRUARY 1972.

2. A HANDFUL OF PROMINENT LOCAL OFFICIALS ELECTED IN 1970 SURVIVED THE ADVENT OF THE NEW REGIME AND CONTINUE IN THE POSITIONS TO WHICH THEY WERE ORIGINALLY ELECTED. AMONG THESE ARE SOMETIME PRESIDENTIAL HOPEFUL, QUITO MAYOR SIXTO DURAN-BALLEN, AND THE MAYOR OF CUENCA, DR. ALEJANDRO SERRANO AGUILAR, WHOSE PAST POLITICAL CAREER HAS INCLUDED TWO STINTS AS A CONGRESSMAN AND AN APPOINT-
MENT AS GOVERNOR OF AZUAY PROVINCE.
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3. AGUIRRE DID NOT SPELL OUT DETAILS OF FORTHCOMING DECREE EXCEPT TO REAFFIRM WHAT GOE HAS BEEN SAYING FOR ALMOST SIX MONTHS NOW: NEW PROVICIAL AND MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS WILL NOT RPT NOT BE HELD AND, WHETHER INCUMBENT'S TERMS ARE RENEWED OR NEW INDIVIDUALS BROUGHT IN IT WILL BE THROUGH THE APPOINTIVE RATHER THAN ELECTIVE PROCESS. (SEE PARAS 8 AND 9 OF REFTEL.)

4. ALTHOUGH DECREE HAS NOT YET BEEN PROMULGATED, COMMENTARY HAS ALREADY BEGUN TO FOCUS ON WHAT ECUADOR'S FEW REMAINING ELECTED OFFICIALS WILL DO IN THE VENT THEY ARE ASKED TO STAY ON IN AN APPOINTED CAPACITY. SPEAKING IN TERMS PROBABLY QUITE CHARACTERISTIC OF THE REGIME'S CIVILIAN DETRACTORS, FORMER FOREIGN MINISTER JULIO PRADO WRITES IN THE MAY 31 EDITION OF EL TIEMPO THAT THESE ELECTED PERSONALITIES HAVE COMPLETED THEIR LEGITIMATE MANDATE. HE ARGUES THAT THEY SHOULD NOT DISGRACE THE DEMOCRATIC PROCESS WHEREBY THEY CAME TO OFFICE BY NOW CONSENTING TO CONTINUE AT THE SUFFERANCE OF THE GOVERNMENT.

5. PRADO IS, OF COURSE, SHARPLY CRITICAL OF THE GOE AS A GENERAL RULE AND HIS COMMENTS COME AS NO SURPRISE. ANOTHER, QUITE DIFFERENT POINT OF VIEW APPEARED IN EL TIEMPO TWO DAYS LATER, BALANCING THE POLEMIC BY REPEATING THE CLASSIC ARGUMENT THAT A GOOD MAN OWES IT TO HIS COUNTRY TO SERVE, WHEN IT FALLS ON EVIL TIMES, LEST A WORSE MAN BE APPOINTED IN HIS PLACE. CALLING HIS VIEW A "PRAGMATIC" SOLUTION THE PSEUDONYMOUS AUTHOR MADE THE FURTHER POINT THAT, EVEN IF HIS TERM BE ENDED, A MAN ONCE POPULARLY ELECTED TO PUBLIC OFFICE ENJOYS A GREATER MORAL CLAIM TO THAT OFFICE THAN SOME MERE APPOINTEE.

6. A SIMILAR VIEW WAS RECENTLY EXPRESSED TO A MISSION OFFICER BY SIXTO DURAN HIMSELF. DESPITE PRESSURE TO TAKE OVER MANAGEMENT OF THE QUITO BRANCH OF THE FAMILY RUN BANCO DE GUAYAQUIL, DURAN PROFESSED TO BE QUITE WILLING TO CONTINUE IN HIS MAYORAL POST; THE ONLY DOUBT HE HAD WAS WHETHER HE WOULD BE ASKED TO STAY.

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7. DURAN IS IN AN ENVIABLE POSITION. HE AND HIS ELECTED COLLEAGUES ARE ECUADOR'S ONLY REMAINING LINK WITH CONSTITUTIONAL POLITICS. AS PURELY LOCAL OFFICIALS THEY ARE NOT HELD RESPONSIBLE FOR ISSUES, SUCH AS LAND REFORM AND INFLATION, WHICH BEDEVIL THE GOE. AND THEY GET CONSTANT PUBLIC EXPOSURE, A BENEFIT WHICH IS DENIED TO THE BULK OF ECUADOR'S PROFESSIONAL POLITICIANS. WE WOULD GUESS THAT DURAN, IF ASKED BY THE GOE TO STAY ON, WILL JUMP

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AT THE CHANCE.
BREWSTER

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